

I/We Claim

1. A postage meter including first control means to generate print signals defining an invalid postage indicium, said print signals including first print data signals defining a valid postage indicium and second print data signals defining a void marking; authorized printing means operative in response to said print data signals to print a postage indicium on a mail item; and
- 10 second control means operative to prevent operation of the authorized printing means by said second print data signals whereby the authorized printing means is operated by the first print data signals to print a valid postage indicium.
- 15 2. A postage meter as claimed in claim 1 wherein the print signals comprise a series of strings of print signals, first strings comprising first print data signals and second strings comprising second print data signals, a
- 20 determined bit position of said strings of print data having a first binary value in respect of first print data signals and a second binary value in respect of second print data signals; and wherein the second control means is responsive to a binary value of said determined bit
- 25 position to reject strings of print data in which the determined bit position has the second binary value.
3. A postage meter as claimed in claim 1 wherein the second control means is responsive to control signals
- 30 generated by the first control means to reject print data signals defining the void marking and not defining the valid postage indicium.
4. A postage meter as claimed in claim 1 wherein the
- 35 second control means stores a bit map of print data signals corresponding to the void marking and the second control means is operative to utilize said bit map to

inhibit operation of the authorized printing means by print data signals defining the void marking.

5. A method of printing postage indicia including the steps of generating print data signals defining an invalid postage indicium; outputting said print data signals to authorised printing means; and rejecting selected ones of said print data signals to cause the authorised printing means to print a valid postage indicium.

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